Spring awoke like a breathe of fresh air, brightening the mood that had lingered from the grim, frigid winter. As if it had been in hibernation, the sun opened its curtains, the blanket of light covering our village. My neighbours opened their doors on that first Saturday of the season, shovels, watering cans and seeds all anticipating the moment. Everyone anticipating the moment. The moment the flowers would bloom.

Everyone except my sedentary parents. Every year, they created a new excuse like a student who forgot to complete and hand in their homework. Except they were more intelligent. “Hip problem, you know, old age,” they would say to Helen, the nineteen year old next door, or “too much work to complete,” they would chuckle to the retired, elderly man down the street. Yet every year, they still, more reluctantly than a student forced to sit an optional test, planted one sunflower seed, purposely as careless as a two year old.

So when my friends charged up my driveway faster than cheetahs my first year of primary school, questioning what I had planted for the Spring Flowers Festival, I had no choice but to mumble “I’m too busy,” when the reality was my parents were koalas and I had less rights than a murderer in prison.

As spring continued on, I admired other roses, poppies and daisies while my sunflower wiltered as it was carelessly nurtured. While opened up to the sky, mine refused to awake from its fitful sleep. Everyday mine stayed asleep while others grew to beautiful flowers, my mood became further and further from everyone else’s, and closer and closer to my sunflower’s.

Once it had finally decided to bloom, however, nothing changed. The petals wiltered as it was being carelessly nurtured, while others were a kaleidoscope of colours that looked like mosaics. Others held their heads high with pride, while mine bowed its head down in shame. Others were as straight as sticks, while mine was a question mark. Finally, I asked to culture the flower, and my parents didn’t even glance up at me from their phones, so I took the initiative.

As I watched the flower grow from an unwanted weed into a mesmerising plant, my mood brightened like spring had that first day. The sunflower had once brought gloom into my life, now it brought joy.